



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT FIRE MARSHAL'S ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2023**

HB-5496 AN ACT CONCERNING PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VIDEOGRAPHIC SPECIAL EFFECTS

Good afternoon Representative Boyd, Senator Gaston, Representative Howard, Senator Cicarella and distinguished members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Roger Nelson and I am the Fire Marshal for the Bloomfield Center Fire District and current Vice-President and Co-legislative Representative for the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association.

The Connecticut Fire Marshals Association opposes **HB-5496 AN ACT CONCERNING PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VIDEOGRAPHIC SPECIAL EFFECTS**. This proposed bill seeks "To allow for the sale, purchase and use of photographic and videographic special effect smoke bombs in this state."

Smoke Bombs are pyrotechnic devices and are classified as 1.4g, Class "C" consumer grade fireworks that are currently prohibited in the State of Connecticut as defined on C.G.S. 29-357.

Smoke Bombs, when used, create sufficient heat to ignite combustible materials, and the devices retain heat for a significant period of time following discharge. Devices can reach temperatures around 1600° F and melt both carbon steel and stainless steel at that temperature.

Warnings on the devices indicate "EXTREMELY HOT" and advise the user to "Wait 10 minutes after use before handling." Disposal instructions indicate "Before disposing, submerge discharged product in water for 24 to 48 hours in a secure area." Smoke Bombs are flammable and should not be used, as per manufacturer instructions, by anyone under the age of 18.

Smoke Bombs have been the documented cause of several fires due to their use and disposal. Most notably, authorities determined that the El Dorado wildfire in San Bernadino County, California on September 5, 2020 was caused by the use of a smoke bomb during a gender reveal party. Private citizens discharged the smoke bomb and a fire resulted, burning more than 22,000 acres of forest, damaging homes, and killing a firefighter who was battling the fire.

As with any pyrotechnic devices, inherent risks exist in their use and disposition. Smoke Bombs are no exception. Smoke Bombs can be currently used in Connecticut with a Special Effects permits issued by DESPP, by a pyrotechnicians who possess a valid Connecticut Certificate of Competency to Shoot Special

Effects. Special Effects are commonly used, with a permit and licensed shooter, at venues such as XL Center, Rentschler Field, The Oakdale, Webster Bank Arena and Some wedding venues such as Aria.

The use of Smoke Bombs should be entrusted to trained, licensed, professionals who will ensure that the necessary precautions are taken to avoid unnecessary and preventable fires that result in tragedies.

The attached photos depict a smoke bomb that was found in a fire scene in 2016 in Bethany, Connecticut. The first photo depicts a burn pattern created on a doorway inside the second floor of an abandoned residence from a smoke bomb that was initiated during training. The following photos depict a smoke bomb being discharged to demonstrate the amount of heat generated. Note the flames coming from the canister to generate the smoke release.

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